

A guide for the perfect picture: Where to find the most Instagrammable places in Aruba



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Trump signs executive order that could reclassify marijuana as a less dangerous drug

By **LINDSAY WHITEHURST**
and **BILL BARROW**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump signed an executive order Thursday that could reclassify marijuana as a less dangerous drug and open new avenues for medical research, a major shift in federal drug policy that inches closer to what many states have done.

The switch would move marijuana away from its current classification as a Schedule I drug, alongside heroin and LSD. Cannabis would instead be a Schedule III substance, like ketamine and some anabolic steroids.

Reclassification by the Drug Enforcement Administration would not make it legal for recreational use by adults nationwide, but it could change how the drug is regulated and reduce a hefty tax burden on the cannabis industry.

The Republican president said he had received a deluge of phone calls support-



President Donald Trump listens as Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services administrator Dr. Mehmet Oz speaks during an executive order signing in the Oval Office of the White House, Thursday, Dec. 18, 2025, in Washington.

Associated Press

ing the move and its potential to help patients. "We have people begging for me to do this. People that are in great pain," he said. Similarly, the Justice Department under Trump's Democratic predecessor, Joe Biden, proposed re-

classifying marijuana to a Schedule III substance. Unlike Biden, Trump did not have open encouragement from across his party for the move.

Some Republicans have spoken out in opposition to any changes and urged

Trump to maintain current standards. Such a switch typically requires an arduous process, including a public comment period that has drawn tens of thousands of reactions from across the U.S. The DEA was still in the review process when Trump took office in January. Trump's order is expected to speed the process along, though it was not immediately clear how long it might take.

Many states have legalized the recreational use of marijuana for adults or allow it for medical purposes. But U.S. laws have remained stricter, potentially leaving people subject to federal prosecution.

Polling from Gallup shows more Americans back a less restrictive approach: Support for marijuana legalization has grown significantly, from just 36% support in 2005 to 68% last year.

Trump's order also calls for expanded research and access to CBD, a legal and increasingly popular hemp-derived product whose benefits are debated by experts.

A new Medicare program would allow older adults to access legal hemp-derived CBD at no cost, if recom-

mended by a doctor, said Dr. Mehmet Oz, who heads the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

More than 20 Republican senators, several of them staunch Trump allies, signed a letter this year urging the president to keep marijuana a Schedule I drug. Led by North Carolina Sen. Ted Budd, the group argued that marijuana continues to be dangerous and that a shift would "undermine your strong efforts to Make America Great Again." They argued, too, that marijuana negatively affects users' physical and mental health, as well as road and workplace safety.

"The only winners from re-scheduling will be bad actors such as Communist China, while Americans will be left paying the bill," the letter said, referring to China's place in the cannabis market.

As for decriminalizing marijuana, Trump has not previously committed to such a move, though he had considered reclassifying it for much of his second term. He once said as a candidate that it should remain a state-by-state issue.

As president, he has made his crusade against other drugs, especially fentanyl, a feature of his second term, ordering U.S. military attacks on Venezuelan and other boats the administration insists are ferrying drugs.

He signed another executive order declaring fentanyl a weapon of mass destruction. □



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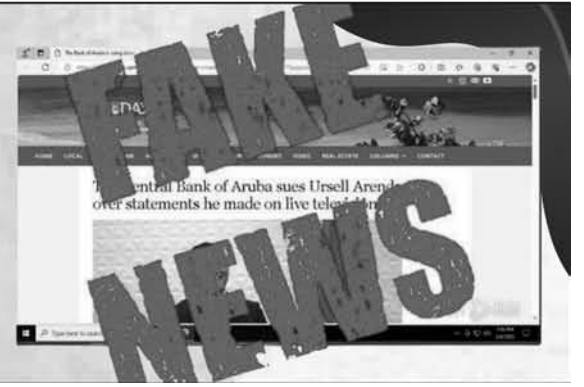


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U.S. government admits role in causing helicopter-plane collision that killed 67 in Washington

By JOSH FUNK

AP Transportation Writer

The U.S. government admitted Wednesday that the actions of an air traffic controller and Army helicopter pilot played a role in causing a collision last January between an airliner and a Black Hawk near the nation's capital, killing 67 people.

It was the deadliest plane crash on American soil in more than two decades.

The official response to the first lawsuit filed by one of the victims' families said that the government is liable in the crash partly because the air traffic controller violated visual separation procedures that night. Plus, the filing said, the Army helicopter pilots' "failure to maintain vigilance so as to see and avoid" the airline jet makes the government liable. But the filing suggested that others, including the pilots of the jet and the air-



National Transportation Safety Board Chairwoman Jennifer Homendy presides over the NTSB fact-finding hearing on the DCA midair collision accident, at the National Transportation and Safety Board boardroom, July 30, 2025, in Washington.

lines, may also have played a role. The lawsuit also blamed American Airlines and its regional partner, PSA Airlines, for roles in the crash,

but those airlines have filed motions to dismiss.

And the government denied that any air traffic controllers or officials at the Fed-

eral Aviation Administration or Army were negligent.

At least 28 bodies were pulled from the icy waters of the Potomac River af-

ter the helicopter collided with the American Airlines regional jet while it was landing at Ronald Reagan National Airport in northern Virginia, just across the river from Washington, D.C., officials said. The plane carried 60 passengers and four crew members, and three soldiers were aboard the helicopter.

Attorney says loss of life was needless

Robert Clifford, one of the attorneys for the family of victim Casey Crafton, said the government admitted "the Army's responsibility for the needless loss of life" and the FAA's failure to follow air traffic control procedures while "rightfully" acknowledging others American Airlines and PSA Airlines also contributed to the deaths. The families of the victims "remain deeply saddened and anchored in the grief caused by this tragic loss of life," he said. □

Associated Press

House Democrats release more photos from Epstein's estate

By STEPHEN GROVES

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Democrats released several dozen more photos Thursday from the estate of the convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, showing his associations with the rich and famous, as the Department of Justice faces a deadline to release many of its case files on the late financier by the end of the week.

The photos released Thursday were among more than 95,000 that the House Oversight Committee has received after issuing a subpoena for the photos that Epstein had in his

possession before he died in a New York jail cell in 2019. Congress has also passed, and President Donald Trump has signed, a law requiring the Justice Department to release its case files on Epstein, and his longtime girlfriend and confidante Ghislaine Maxwell, by Friday. Anticipation about what those files will show is running high after they have been the subject of conspiracy theories and speculation about his friendships with Trump, former President Bill Clinton, the former Prince Andrew, and others.

House Democrats have already released dozens of

photos from Epstein's estate showing Trump, Clinton and Andrew, who lost his royal title and privileges this year amid scrutiny of his relationship with the wealthy financier. The photos released Thursday showed Epstein cooking with Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, an Emirati businessman. The photos also include the billionaire Bill Gates and images of a 2011 dinner of notable people and wealthy philanthropists hosted by a nonprofit group. The committee made no accusations of wrongdoing by the men in the photos.

There were also images of passports, visas and iden-



Audrey Strauss, acting U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, points to a photo of Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell, during a news conference in New York on July 2, 2020.

Associated Press

tification cards from Russia, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, South Africa and Lithuania with personally identifying information redacted, as well as photos of Epstein with women

or girls whose faces were blacked out. The committee has said it is redacting information from the photos that may lead to the identity of victims being revealed. □

Mamdani has a place in NYC history. But which place in a centuries-long list of mayors?

By JENNIFER PELTZ

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Zohran Mamdani can claim multiple firsts when he becomes New York's mayor Jan. 1.

Besides being the first Muslim and first person of South Asian heritage elected to the office, the Democrat also is poised to shape city history by being the 112th mayor rather than 111th, as he was expecting. That's due to a longstanding oversight in record-keeping that recently gained new attention.

"I'm excited to be whichever mayor," Mamdani told reporters Wednesday after learning about the counting contretemps. It shows how tricky history's arithmetic can be.

Paul Hortenstine, an independent historian exploring early New York mayors' participation in slavery, recently noticed that the city government's widely used list of mayors undercounted Matthias Nicolls, a figure from the beginning years of English colonial rule in New York.

Nicolls was listed as the sixth mayor, from 1671 to 1672,



New York City Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani listens as President Donald Trump speaks in the Oval Office of the White House, Friday, Nov. 21, 2025, in Washington.

Associated Press

but there was no mention of his return to office two years later. In the interim, successor John Lawrence took office, then was ousted by a Dutch invasion that briefly implemented a different form of colonial government. The Netherlands eventually gave up the area in exchange for other concessions, and the

new English governor reappointed Nicolls in late 1674. Other mayors were counted multiple times if they served nonconsecutive terms, so Hortenstine suggested Nicolls get the same treatment. The correction would entail renumbering 350 years of subsequent mayors, from William Derwall (who would become

No. 9) to incumbent Eric Adams (who'd be No. 111). "The numbering of mayors is a fascinating issue that is much more difficult than it appears at first glance," Hortenstine said by phone. A Washington, D.C.-area researcher, Hortenstine has his own history with New York mayors: He worked for Michael Bloomberg's 2009

reelection campaign. (The three-consecutive-term Bloomberg would be 109th if the list is renumbered.)

He hopes the debate will stir interest in early mayors and their personal and political involvement with slavery.

As Hortenstine noted, a former New York State Library official, the late Peter Christoph, pointed out the Nicholls numbering flub in 1989. This time, after local news site Gothamist broached the apparent mayoral miscount, the city Department of Records and Information Services looked into it.

In a Dec. 11 blog post, agency archivist Michael Lorenzini painstakingly traced a trail of complexities and gaps in centuries-old records. When the city began printing lists of past mayors in the mid-1800s, Nicolls' second term didn't make it. "It does appear that on January 1, 2026, Mayor Mamdani should be mayor number 112," Lorenzini wrote, while noting "the numbering of New York City 'mayors' has been somewhat arbitrary and inconsistent." □

Trump's handpicked board votes to rename Washington performing arts center the Trump-Kennedy Center

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's handpicked board voted on Thursday to rename Washington's leading performing arts center as the Trump-Kennedy Center, the White House said.

Press secretary Karoline Leavitt announced the vote on social media, saying it was because of the "unbelievable work President Trump has done over the last year in saving the building. Not only from the standpoint of its reconstruction, but also financially, and its reputation."

Trump, a Republican who's chairman of the board, often refers to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, which is

named for a Democratic predecessor, as the "Trump Kennedy Center."

Asked on Dec. 7 as he walked the red carpet for the Kennedy Center Honors program whether he

would rename the venue after himself, Trump said such a decision would be up to the board.

Earlier this month, Trump talked about a "big event on Friday at the Trump Ken-

nedy Center" before saying, "excuse me, at the Kennedy Center," as his audience laughed. He was referring to the FIFA World Cup soccer draw for 2026, in which he participated.

A name change won't sit well with some Kennedy family members.

Maria Shriver, a niece of John F. Kennedy, referred to the legislation introduced in Congress to rebrand the Kennedy Center as the Donald J. Trump Center for the Performing Arts as "insane" in a social media post in July.

"It makes my blood boil. It's so ridiculous, so petty, so small minded," she wrote. "Truly, what is this about? It's always about something."

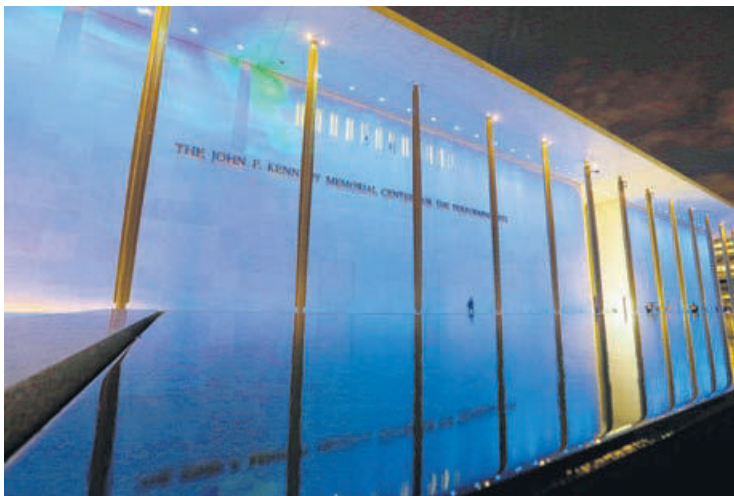
'Let's get rid of the Rose

Garden. Let's rename the Kennedy Center.' What's next?"

Trump earlier this year turned the Kennedy-era Rose Garden at the White House into a patio by removing the lawn and laying down paving stones.

Another Kennedy family member, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., serves in Trump's Cabinet as secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Trump showed scant interest in the Kennedy Center during his first term as president, but since returning to office in January he has replaced board members appointed by Democratic presidents with some of his most ardent supporters, who then elected him as board chairman. □



The John F. Kennedy Center Memorial Center for the Performance Arts illuminated as part of the "Nordic Cool 2013: Northern Lights" exhibit, in Washington, Feb. 28, 2013.

Associated Press

Under pressure at home, Belgium's leader treads a tight rope with EU partners over funds for Ukraine



Belgium's Prime Minister Bart De Wever, left, speaks with Netherlands' Prime Minister Dick Schoof, right, and Poland's Prime Minister Donald Tusk during a round table meeting at the EU Summit in Brussels, Thursday, Dec. 18, 2025.

By **LORNE COOK**
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — For decades, Belgium has been at the beating heart of the European Union. The headquarters of the 27-nation bloc's main institutions and NATO are based there. EU leaders meet in the capital Brussels at least four times a year.

But at Thursday's EU summit of presidents and government leaders, Belgium

and its prime minister were at the heart of political tensions that could send ripples across the world's biggest trading bloc for years to come.

The tensions arise from a plan to use frozen Russian assets to fund Ukraine's military and economic needs for the next two years. Most of that money is blocked at Euroclear, a Brussels-based financial clearinghouse.

Belgium fears that Russia

will strike back; in the courts or perhaps by other means. Prime Minister Bart De Wever whose political ambition before taking office in February was to break up Belgium, gut its state structures and grant more autonomy to his northern Flanders region wants Europe to unite around his concerns.

The reparations loan plan, De Wever told Belgian lawmakers on Thursday, "drastically increases the risk of

Russian retaliation. It's not acceptable that this happens to Belgium alone. If we jump, we jump together."

The money blocked at Euroclear 193 billion euros (\$226 billion) as of September equals almost a third of the kingdom's gross domestic product. Belgium is mired in debt, among the worst financial performers in the EU.

For months, De Wever struggled to chaperone his five-party coalition into agreeing on a budget. Those torturous negotiations only ended recently, making it tricky for him to agree on a loan to Ukraine that might hurt Belgium's finances.

As the "reparations loan" plan was being devised, his government regularly highlighted its vulnerability to retaliation.

After EU leaders last debated the assets in October, Belgian Defense Minister Theo Francken said that a series of drone incidents at Belgium's airports and military bases appeared to be "a spying operation" aimed at "destabilizing" people. The culprits were never identified.

Ahead of Thursday's sum-

mit, Belgian officials underlined how the Russian Central Bank last Friday had sued Euroclear for more money than the clearinghouse is actually holding, and warned that more could come.

Some EU nations believe that De Wever has been too vocal about his opposition to the loans and backed himself into a corner that he will struggle to escape from without embarrassment at home.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he understands "the risks that he is talking about, but I think that we face bigger risks." He added that "Ukraine has the right to this money because Russia is destroying us."

With Belgium standing firm, the question for its EU partners is whether to simply forge ahead without De Wever's consent. Ukraine needs the money early next year, and even Belgium agrees that the EU must find the funds soon.

At least nine countries would have to object to prevent the loans and no blocking minority has yet emerged. □

Associated Press

A parking ticket in an ultra-Orthodox neighborhood in Jerusalem sets off clashes with police

By **JULIA FRANKEL**
Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — An attempt by Israeli authorities to write a routine parking ticket in an ultra-Orthodox neighborhood in Jerusalem turned violent on Thursday as members of the community quickly gathered to protest, attacking and injuring 13 police officers, authorities said.

The violence reflected growing tensions between the Israeli authorities and the ultra-Orthodox, known as Haredim, as the government mulls plans to draft them into the military. Clashes have often broken out recently when Israeli authorities have entered the crowded and insular

ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods.

Police said the clashes first broke out after an inspector tried to issue a parking ticket and was met with violence and threats. The police made one arrest. Hundreds of ultra-Orthodox protesters soon arrived, trying to free the suspect, damaging police cars and throwing stones and eggs at the police, they said.

In response, police threw stun grenades, fired water cannons and beat protesters with batons, according to videos circulating on Israeli social media.

Residents accused the police of trying to arrest the man for failing to register for the draft an accusa-

tion police denied.

Five policemen were brought to the hospital and several others were lightly injured. As of Thursday afternoon, police said they had arrested four people and an were investigating several others.

Photos circulating on Israeli social media showed an overturned car and vehicles with broken windshields.

Later on Thursday, ultra-Orthodox protesters blocked a major highway along Israel's coast, police said. No violence was immediately reported.

When Israel was founded in 1948, a small number of gifted ultra-Orthodox scholars were granted ex-

emptions from the draft, which is compulsory for most Jews. But with a push from politically powerful religious parties, those numbers have swelled over the decades. Many secular Israelis especially those

who have served multiple rounds of duty in the latest war between Israel and the Palestinian militant Hamas group in Gaza now support rolling back that exemption and drafting the ultra-Orthodox. □



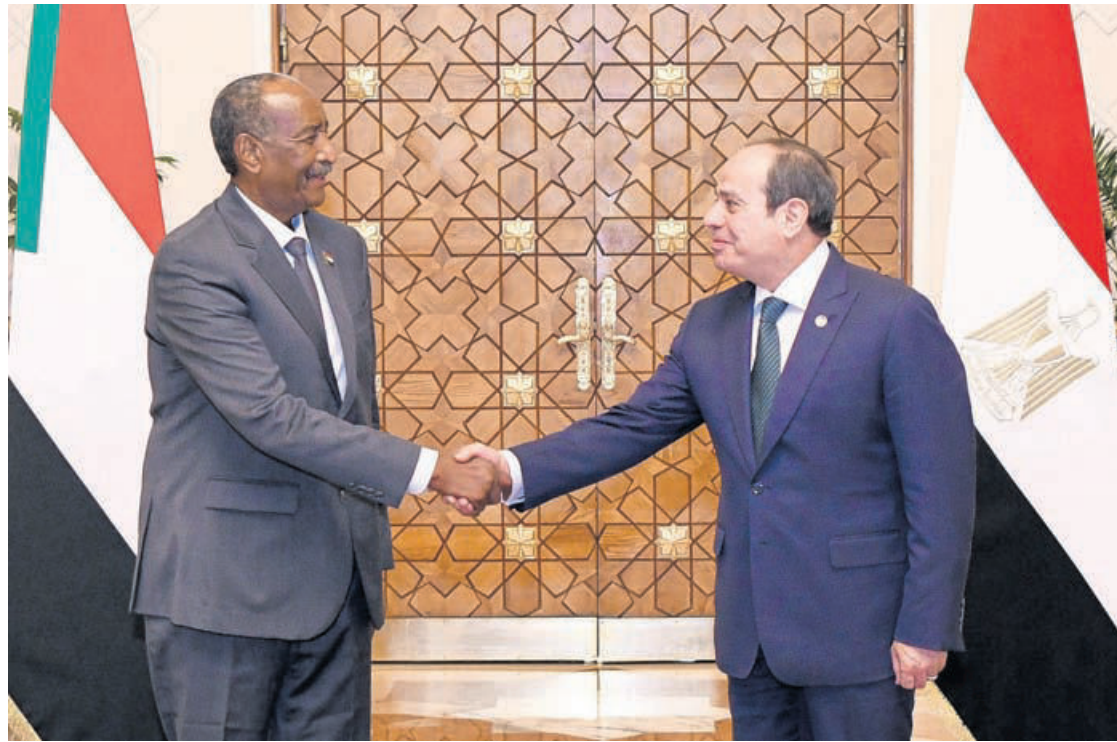
Israeli police officers scuffle with young Ultra-Orthodox Jewish protesters during a violent disturbance in Jerusalem, Thursday, Dec. 18, 2025.

Associated Press

Sudanese paramilitary group RSF killed more than 1,000 civilians in Zamzam camp in April, U.N. says

By **FAY ABUELGASIM**
Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — More than 1,000 civilians were killed in a three-day attack by the Rapid Support Forces paramilitary group earlier this year on the largest displacement camp in western Sudan, the U.N. Human Rights Office said in a report released Thursday. RSF stormed Zamzam camp in April as part of its siege of the city of el-Fasher, the provincial capital of North Darfur province. In the attack, hundreds of people were summarily executed, according to the report. People were killed in house-to-house raids and the main market, as well as in schools and health facilities. The report detailed patterns of sexual violence, "including rape and gang rape, and sexual slavery." The report called it "a consistent pattern of serious violations of international humanitarian law and gross abuses of international human rights law." It comes a few weeks after Amnesty International accused the RSF of committing war crimes in their attack of the camp.



In this photo, provided by Egypt's presidency media office, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, greets Sudan's top general Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, at the Presidential Palace in Cairo, Egypt, Thursday, Dec. 18, 2025.

Zamzam was the largest displacement camp in Sudan with more than 500,000 people there prior to the April attacks. RSF blocked entry of food and other essential goods to the Zamzam camp for months prior to the attack, the U.N. report says. Zamzam camp was established in 2004 to house

people driven from their homes by attacks by the Sudanese Janjaweed militia. Located just south of el-Fasher, it swelled over the years to cover an area 8 kilometers (5 miles) long by about 3 kilometers (2 miles) wide. RSF has been at war with the Sudanese military since April 2023. The conflict has

killed 40,000 people though some rights groups say the death toll is significantly higher and has created the world's worst humanitarian crisis with more than 14 million people displaced. Many areas have experienced famine, including at the Zamzam camp. "The findings contained in this report are yet another

stark reminder of the need for prompt action to end the cycles of atrocities and violence, and to ensure accountability and reparations for victims," U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk said. Türk warned that the patterns of violence in Zamzam are now being repeated in el-Fasher as RSF took over the city. "These horrific patterns of violations committed with impunity are consistent with what my office has repeatedly documented, including during the RSF takeover of el-Fasher in late October," Türk said. Separately, Sudan's top general met with Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi in Cairo Thursday amid growing pressure to resolve the war in Sudan. Burhan's meeting with el-Sissi came after the Sudanese general held talks with Saudi officials in Riyadh earlier this week. U.S. envoy Massad Boulos was also in Riyadh at the same time and met with Saudi officials. There was no public announcement that Burhan met with the American official. □

Brazil's Lula vows to veto bill that could reduce Bolsonaro's prison sentence

By **GABRIELA SÁ PESSOA**
Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva said Thursday he will veto a bill that could

significantly reduce the 27-year prison sentence of former President Jair Bolsonaro, who was arrested in November for attempting a coup.



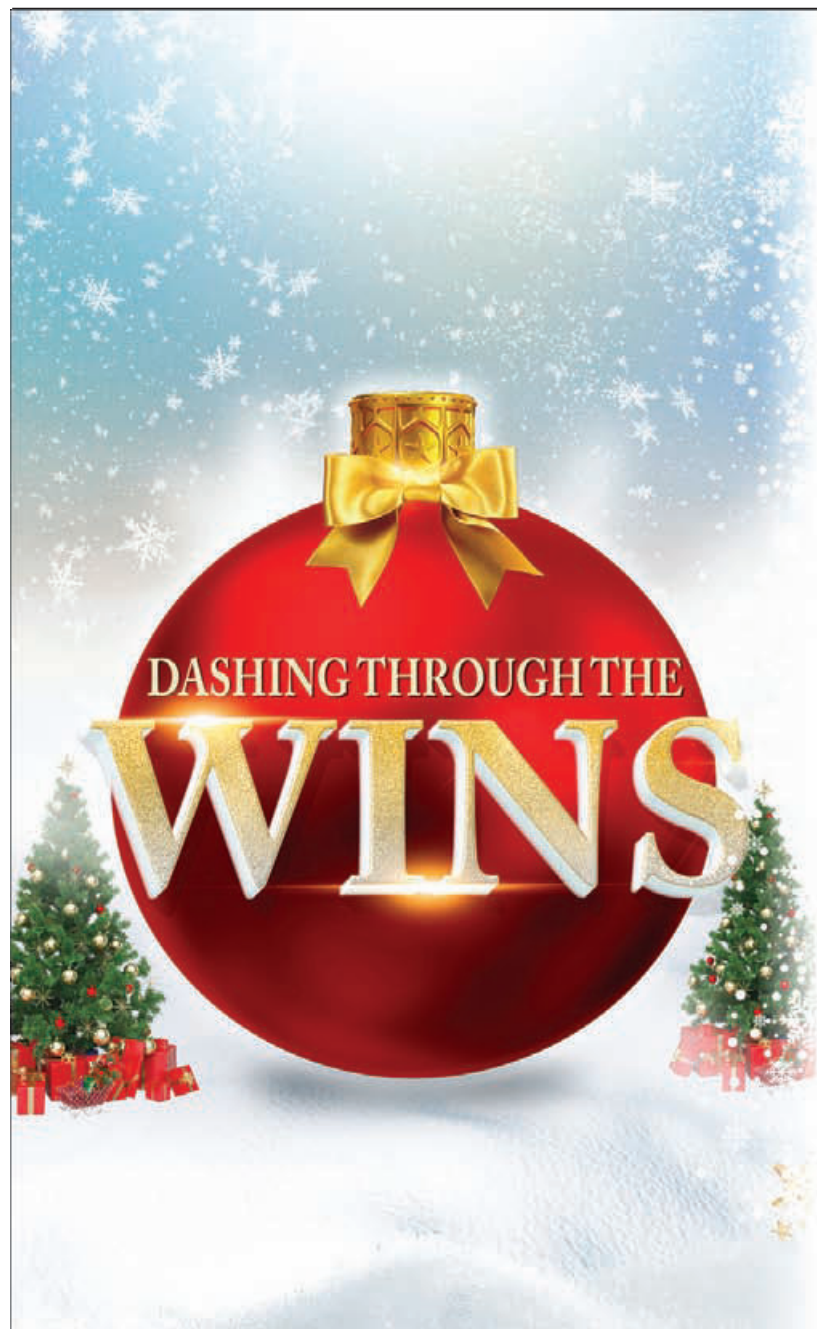
Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva speaks during a year-end press conference at Planalto presidential palace in Brasília, Brazil, Thursday, Dec. 18, 2025.

Associated Press

The Senate passed the bill late Wednesday, following approval by the Chamber of Deputies. "With all due respect to the National Congress, when it reaches my desk, I will veto it," Lula told journalists in Brasília, noting that those who committed crimes against Brazilian democracy "will have to pay for their acts." The text is also expected to be challenged at the Supreme Court. The bill reduces the final sentences of defendants convicted under multiple charges stemming from the coup attempt, including Bolsonaro. The former president's lawyers appealed to the Supreme Court after his con-

viction, saying his prison term was excessive. They also argued that the sentences for abolishing the rule of law and attempting a coup should not be added because they arose from a single episode. The proposed law would speed up sentence progression from harsher to more lenient prison regimes for those convicted. There is no consensus on how much time Bolsonaro would actually serve if the bill takes effect. Under current rules, the former president could move to a less restrictive prison system after 7 years if he met legal requirements while incarcerated. Paulinho da Força, the bill's rapporteur in the Chamber

of Deputies, has estimated that period could be cut to just over two years if the law passes. The bill would also allow sentence reductions of up to two-thirds for crimes committed in a crowd, benefiting defendants convicted of storming public buildings during the Jan. 8, 2023, insurrection in Brasília. Under the bill, those who did not finance or lead the actions could receive reductions ranging from one-third to two-thirds. Sen. Flávio Bolsonaro, the eldest son of the former president and a prospective presidential candidate in next year's election, praised fellow lawmakers for approving the bill, calling it a "first step." □



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Up for a snorkeling adventure in Aruba? Top 3 shipwrecks to explore

(ORANJESTAD) – Aruba is not only the perfect vacation destination to sit back and relax on the sandy beaches but also has great snorkeling spots for passionate adventurers to explore. On the coast of the island, there are various shipwrecks that have become fan-favorites over the years. Here are the top 3 shipwrecks you should explore.

SS Antilla

Dubbed "The Ghost Ship", SS Antilla is the biggest and most visited shipwreck site off the coast of the island. Located in Malmok, this 400-foot ship's story is one of capture and sabotage during WWII.

After Germany invaded The Netherlands, Dutch authorities ordered the confinement of the ship's German crew, who were ported in Aruba because it needed to find a neutral port. The Dutch ordered the ship to be confiscated, but the German crew had other plans. Tak-

ing advantage of a delay caused by an anticipated armed resistance, the Germans started scuttling the ship, opening her seacock and setting her ablaze.

Eventually, the crew was arrested, but SS Antilla could not be saved by the Dutch forces. The Dutch fired two rounds of their 35mm gun aboard the 'Aruba' at SS Antilla and left her to sink. The shipwreck can only be reached by boat. The ship is visible from the surface and during your snorkeling trip you'll be surrounded by hundreds of tropical fishes, but the shipwreck alone is already impressive enough.

SS Pedernales

Like the Antilla, the story of SS Pedernales dates to WWII. Pedernales was used as a lake tanker between Venezuela and Aruba, and sailed under British Flag. At this time, The US and Britain were using Aruba and Curacao as fuel stations for the war ships. Under operation Neuland

(disruption of British and American oil sources), Germany fleets bombed Pedernales. The ship was later cut into three sections, two of which were taken to the US for reconstruction. The remaining part stayed in Aruba and was used as target practice. Eventually, the ship became a snorkeling site that has attracted many visitors throughout the years. Pedernales lies on the northwest coast of Aruba, and is no more than 10 feet under water, making it an ideal site for snorkelers and divers of all levels.

Jane Sea Wreck

The Jane Sea Wreck lies near Palm Island at 100 feet underwater. Jane's story is heavily speculated, making her origin a tale of legends. Launched in 1959, the 190-foot ship was initially called "Blackthorn". Her last owner, S&D Shipping Ltd. named her Jane Sea. Jane was a cement freighter between Venezuela and Aruba.



The story goes that the Jane Sea arrived one day at the Barcadera Harbor, where Aruban customs discovered several tons of cocaine. The ship was confiscated and petitioned went out for her owner to claim her. However, several years went by and no one came forward to claim the ship, so dive operators decided to sink her as an artificial reef. This happened in 1988. Jane Sea earned the nick name Jane C, because of the illicit white powder discovered on board.

Jane is now beautifully overgrown with coral and is

home to a diverse set of marine life, like turtles, octopus, crabs and sometimes even nurse sharks.

The stories behind these shipwrecks enriches their exploration and offers snorkelers and divers a glance into the past, as well as the beautiful marine life that have molded these wrecks into their home. So, grab your equipment and discover another side of what Aruba has to offer! We highly recommend you embark on your adventure with the guide of a professional and be sure to take of yourself and Aruba's precious nature. □



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Cas Floria: The Decorated Houses of Aruba

(Oranjestad)—There may be as many as 200 to 300 houses in Aruba that have beautiful decorations, including curtains, stars, flowers, half-moons, etc., placed on the corners or the upper parts of the house.

These houses can be found everywhere, in nearly every district of Aruba. People always thought that these designs came from an Indigenous culture; possibly, the star design resembled the way it was shown, similar to the "God Sun" of the Indigenous people. However, the history of this decorative system does not go very far back in time.

In his book *Millefiori di Aruba*, Father Nooyen declares that the first house to receive this type of decoration was the home of Mr. Bernardo Eman Croes in Pos Chikito. Julien (Janchi) Christiaans and Gregorio (Goy) Semeleer built this house in 1920 and created the decorations on the upper corners of the house. Other people in Pos Chikito, who saw this beau-



tiful work, also wanted their houses decorated in the same way.

Leoncio (Joonchi) Henricus of Pos Chikito learned the work from Janchi Christiaans and, together with his son Bonifacio (Bonny) Henricus, continued decorating houses in Pos Chikito and Sabana Basora.

Janchi Christiaans, Goy Semeleer, and others from

Noord, such as Hilario Christiaans, Victor Tromp, Gerardo Jacobs, and Cornelis Rosa, brought the same decoration to houses in Noord and Paradera. In 1927, Janchi Christiaans built a house for Julian Tromp in Buguruy.

This was the first house in Noord to receive this type of decoration. Later, those in Paradera, Santa Cruz, and Savaneta copied the house decorations. They practiced these systems up until 1944.

Even today, the patterns are well preserved and protected, but they are no longer used.

Janchi Christiaans began cutting the patterns out of zinc plates and cardboard. He also had his own creations and systems, while Leoncio and Bonifacio Henricus produced their own fantasies. This is what made these decorations popular: many people could turn their imagination into expressive art.

However, the decoration

of houses was not originally Janchi Christiaans's idea. Janchi was a disciple of his father, Hose Christiaans, and of the Donati family, from Italian ancestors. They also made these decorations, though without using any patterns, simply designing and applying them with common plaster as the material.

Using Dr. Johan Hartog's *Aruba, Breve Historia* as reference, I noticed that he also writes that these designs are not indigenous symbols, but only decorative fantasies. One point of disagreement is that he wrote that in 1820 someone from Curaçao began this type of decoration in Aruba.

This means that, according to Father Nooyen, who declared that it began in 1920, it would have actually started 100 years earlier. As part of his research, Ito Tromp also interviewed Mr. Julio Maduro of the Department of Labor at that time, who told him that around 1880 Johannes (Janchi) Wolff began with house decorations. And as Janchi himself said, he learned this from his grandfather, who in earlier times had built the first lighthouse at California Point.

After comparing his information, Ito Tromp wrote that Hartog was right concerning the period when decorated houses began in Aruba in 1820. However, it was not people from Curaçao who started it. Victor Tromp, who was 87 years old at the time of writing, was a member of Janchi Wolff's family.

Julio Maduro said that in 1920 they began again with this type of decora-

tion. In general, there is no specific year (up to now) when Arubans first began with this decorative artistic expression. It is interesting to know that these decorations are a kind of symbol for several generations.

For example: Decorations that appear on the house of the Arends family could also be seen on the houses of the Bermudez or Croes families. This was because parents always gave a specific sign to their sons or daughters when they were getting married.

It was also said that these designs had a certain kind of voodoo purpose, to keep away the spirits of the Indigenous people who were buried in the neighborhoods where the houses now stand. However, this has almost completely disappeared.

As for the continuation of these designs from family to family, this is a cultural heritage that is no longer established. For this reason, in earlier times, every young man who married had to have his own house; otherwise, there would be no marriage.

The designs were created according to the individual's imagination. If he saw, for example, six pairs of birds on a tree, he would then paint six pairs of birds on a tree. If he wanted to express his love for his twin children, then he designed a twin.

Nowadays, if you want to use these designs for your house, don't worry—you can simply copy them and paint them. □

Source: E casnan Decora na Aruba (1976) by Ito Tromp.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 21ST

Christmas FARMER'S MARKET

AT THE OSTRICH FARM TIME: 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM



MATIVIDIRI 57, PARADERA

1,200,000 Christmas Point Giveaway Every Friday, Saturday & Sunday

50/30
Friday!We're giving away
\$50 Free Slot Play
to lucky slot and table
game players **every**
30 minutes from
7pm to Midnight!

THE SHOPS AT ALHAMBRA CASINO

Auntie Anne's Pretzels | Aruba Aloe | Baskin-Robbins
Juan Valdez Café | Hungry Piranha - Pizza, Wings & More
The Brownstone Ribs and Seafood | The Market
Shalom Body & Soul Spa | Moments & Memories Jewelry
Magnet Perfume Jewelry & Cosmetics | The Lazy Lizard
Shalom Hair & Nails Bar | Twist of Flavors | Dunkin Donuts
Treasure Cove | El Patio Tacos & Tequila | M8 Boutique
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A guide for the perfect picture: Where to find the most Instagrammable places in Aruba

(Oranjestad)—Imagine, you're out and about on the island and you want to take the most picture-perfect photo to show your friends and family back home and online. It seems like the perfect spot can be hard to find, but Aruba is full of great spots for a quick snapshot! Here are the most Instagrammable places in Aruba.

"I LOVE ARUBA"

Right on Paardenbaai Plaza, near the harbor entrance, you will spot a giant sign that reads "I LOVE ARUBA". A great first stop for a quick shot with the family, this spot is among the few that has become a favorite among tourists, espe-



cially those that are visiting Aruba through a cruise vacation. Speaking of giant signs that read "Aruba" (because there can never be too many), there is another sign you can find along the Linear Park. It may be a long walk from the harbor to get there, but while you're at it, check out these other spots along the way!

Wooden Swing on Plaza Daniel Leo

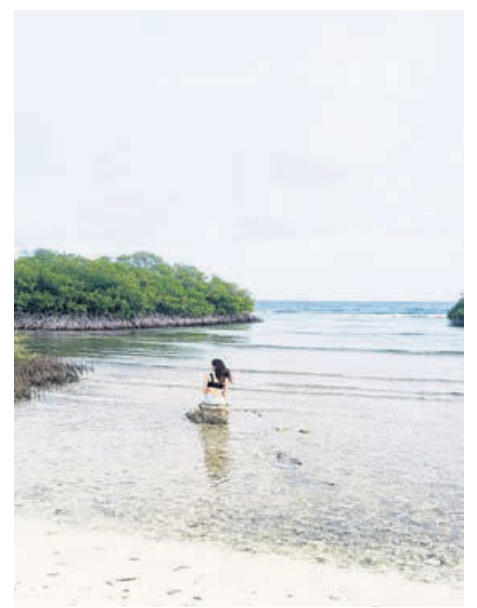
While you're in Mainstreet Oranjestad, check out the wooden swing on Plaza Daniel Leo. This is another favorite among visitors wanting a cute snapshot for Instagram.



Since you've made it this far, one question: How many blue horses have you spotted already?

Mangel Halto

For a different take on beach photos, we definitely recommend Mangel Halto! You can get in the water right by the roots of these beautiful trees (please be careful not to climb them, though!). You will see beautiful skies, birds and other wildlife, and among the greenery of the mangroves, your



picture is sure to pop!

**Yacht Dock in Oranjestad**

Last but certainly not least, the Yacht Dock in Oranjestad is the perfect spot to take a beautiful picture, especially at sunset. The dock is located behind the Wilhelmina Park. This spot offers a gorgeous view of the ocean and sunset, accompanied by the soft waves crashing on the shoreline. You may even spot some iguanas! □

Ever heard of the cah'i orgel? A key instrument in Aruban folklore music

(Oranjestad)—The cah'i orgel music box is an important and unique instrument that is used on the ABC islands in the Dutch Caribbean. This instrument is a staple in our folklore music, and its significance in the traditions of Aruba has and continues to bring together the old and

young.

The origin of the cah'i orgel is said to have come from Europe around 150 years ago. A cross breed between the barrel piano and the organ, the most popular stories said that the instrument came from either England or Germany, but made its way to Italy down to Venezuela, where in 1881, Mr. Horatio Sprock (1866-1949) from Curacao was first introduced to it. After that, Sprock made his own cah'i orgel "Josefina", and successfully debuted it on the streets of Barquisimeto. Back in Curacao, he started his own cah'i orgel business along with his brother Luis. In Aruba, it is said that the cah'i orgel

was introduced by Rufo Wever, who later in his career became one of the composers for the Aruban national anthem.

Rufo Wever was a young musician in 1937 when he established his own cah'i orgel business on the island. Before that he experimented with his uncle's cah'i orgel, and he over the years he learned to build and repair the instrument. In fact, he was incredibly skilled in this, and he was one of the few to have recognized from the start that the cah'i orgel is an instrument that needs preserving.

As mentioned, the cah'i orgel is a music box. Made from mahogany wood, it contains a cylinder with a maximum of eight music pieces.

By rotating the lever on the front side of the box, the cah'i orgel produces music similar to that of a piano, and is accompanied often by someone else playing the "wiri", a percussion instrument made out of steel and reminiscent to the Spanish guiro. Back then, you would often also find someone playing the triangle alongside the cah'i orgel and wiri. In Aruba, the cah'i orgel and wiri is used for traditional music genres, such as the Aruban waltz, tumba, mazurka and more.

Fun fact: another name for the cah'i orgel is the "tingilingi box." □

Source: "E Cilinder Magico entre Aruba y Curaçao" by Marilyn Alcalá-Wallé, Herta Parabirsing-Balentina and Nidia Rosaria-Wallé.



Why You Should Not Miss Aruba's Free City Center Street Car Tour



(Oranjestad)—Aruba's City Center Street Car – or as we call it in Dutch; "Tram van Oranjestad" – is a single track tram line in Oranjestad, the capital city of Aruba. It was inaugurated on 22 December 2012, being the first and so far the only passenger rail service on Aruba and the rest of the Dutch Caribbean. There are two trolleys, a single-deck one with 42 seats and a double-decker with 64 seats. The line was inspired by the popular battery-powered street-car operation at the Grove in Los Angeles, USA. Aruba's streetcars are powered by hydrogen fuel cells, which are charged by the island's year-round trade winds.

Caya Betico Croes, mostly referred to as our "main street" has been developed into a pollution-free pedestrian mall. The double-decker offers you a 360 degree view of the down town area with a picture perfect scenery of the island's clear blue skies. Who would not enjoy a ride on this beautiful and naturally air-conditioned vehicle? The tour consists of a total of 9 stops approximately 200 meters apart from each other; all stops are clearly marked. The tram will bring you close to different museums, historical plazas, monuments, the Protestant church, Aruba's high-end mall, retail shops, and a variety of local and international cuisine restaurants. The "I love Aruba" trademark also belongs to that list. The third stop on the route is close to a 5-minute walk to the famous Renaissance Marina showcasing luxurious yachts and Aruba's blue waters.

The "Tram van Oranjestad" starts from a balloon loop near the Port of Call and serves the downtown area and ends at Plaza Nicky. The first ride starts at 10:00 am sharp with intervals of 25 minutes. The last trolley departs from the cruise port at 5:00 pm. Don't miss this tour of the beautiful Aruba's City Center – it is free for all! □

A quick snack for the road

Learn how to make the Aruban Pastechi!

(Oranjestad)—If you ever been to Aruba before, you probably heard of (and even tried) the Aruban Pastechi. Beloved by young and old, this tasty treat is a staple for party snacks, a quick lunch or even breakfast!

Here's how to make the Pastechi dough.

Ingredients:

- 4 cups of wheat flour
- 1 tbsp baking powder (if using self-rising flour, omit baking powder)
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 0.5 cup of melted butter
- 1 cup water
- 1 egg

Directions:

Sift your flour into a bowl and add all the dry ingredients before giving it a quick mix. Next add the butter, water and egg and mix until thoroughly combined. At this point, your dough will start to get sticky; time for an arm workout. Knead your dough into the bowl you are using or on a clean surface with some flour lightly dusted until its surface is smooth. You'll know your dough is ready when it doesn't stick to your hands or the surface on which you're kneading it. Let your dough rest covered for 15-20 minutes.

After resting, divide your dough into approximately 100 gram balls and roll it flat with a rolling pin. The thickness of the pastechi depends on your taste, but the average thinness would be around ¼ inch or so.

Filling for the pastechis varies according to your taste. The easiest and most common filling you'll find in Aruba is a simple cheese filling. For this, we usually use shredded Gouda, but feel free to use any cheese that melts well when frying the pastry.

Place the filling on your rolled out piece of dough, fold it in half and pinch the sides shut with a fork. If you have a folding tool, feel free to use it for this process. Your pastechi is ready

for the fryer!

If you want to store some pastechis for later use, you can freeze them. A good tip is to place a piece of wax paper in between each pastechi if you are to store them on top of one another. This way the pastechis don't stick to each other when defrosting.

Here in Aruba we enjoy pastechi at any time of the day, but it has become almost tradition to eat pastechis for breakfast on the way to work. Many roadside snack trucks sell pastechi from early morning to noon, and offer a variety of fillings like cheese; ham and cheese; ground beef and pulled chicken to name a few. □



Aruba's cultural and literary development: Then and now



(Oranjestad)—The Aruban culture has seen many substantial developments over the course of a century. With the introduction of the Lago Refinery at the turn of the 20th century, followed by the breakout of the Second World War and the general incentive for political independence during the mid-century, a cultural identity on the island began to take form and have since developed through international and local influences.

In the pre-industrial era of the 19th century, much could not be said about a cultural identity on the island. Still being a part of a Dutch colonial territory at the same, as well as not having political or economic autonomy (Curacao was the center of commerce, cultural life, and political management of the Netherland Antilles at the time), the small population of Aruba consisted mostly of farmers and fishermen, tending to their crops and their cattle, or going out to fish to provide for their family. As Quito Nicolaas states in his article *Historia di Literatura Arubiano: E Bida Cultural* (Literary History of Aruba: Cultural Life), "during the pre-industrial period, there were no significant economic activity that could have created a cultural ambience, with only one way to generate profit at the time for the sub existence of Aruban families."

It wasn't until the introduction of the Lago Refinery in San Nicolas in 1928, that the island saw a small boom in cultural manifestations and entertainment, as farmers left the 'cunucu' (country) life to work in the refinery, which resulted in Aruba acquiring a different economic pillar. Before this, entertain-

ment and cultural manifestations were mostly experiences by local parishes and the island's elite, who often partook in cultural and entertaining activities around the island, like going to the movie theater or coming together to share poetry on Sundays after church.

Literary life

Throughout the 19th century and up until the 1940s, there were also not much trace of a cultural climate for the cultural-literary sector on the island. Primary education was introduced on the island mid-19th century, followed by secondary and higher education around the late 30's and 40's. It wasn't until the 1950s, with the introduction of the E.R.N.A agreement in 1951 and the signing of the Statute in 1954, which allowed more space for and control over the economic and cultural development of Aruba, that the literary life on the island began to grow substantially

compared to decades before. This was in response to local institutions established in the 1940s for cultural and literary growth on the island, but that did not yet capture the attention of the general public. The 1950 brought with it a boom of literary production on the island, like those of V.S. Piterella, as well as migrant authors José Ramón Vicioso y Rings William Rufus, who have also contributed to the literary development on the island. The literary movement was further promoted by local broadcasters Voz di Aruba and Radio Kelkboom, with their regular broadcast of literary works.

The 50s and 60s also saw the influence of international cultures, especially that of the United States. During this time, because of international influences as well as the continued prosperity of the oil refinery, cultural traditions in Aruba began to really take form and

become widespread, as different worldly and local concepts were introduced in the Aruban society. With the establishment of local television broadcast station Tele-Aruba in 1963, and with time and possibilities, local programs such as "Nos Tera" ("Our Land") started to pay more attention to the Aruban culture and worked to form a cultural consciousness in the community. The 1960s also saw the rise of local authors and artists, who were more comfortable in producing works in our native tongue, Papiamentu, but who also produced works in Spanish, English and Dutch. This new phenomenon was in response to the interaction between economic growth, individual prosperity, cultural life and literary expression.

The 21st century

Nowadays, international influence on our culture is still prevalent, especially those from Latin America, the United States and The Netherlands. Nevertheless, there also exists a strong cultural identity and traditions that are exclusive to the Aruban culture, often manifesting during traditional celebrations, like Dia di San Juan/Dera Gay (St. John's Day), Dia di Himno y Bandera (National Hymn and Flag Day), Camping during Easter and much more. With the surge of social media in the last decade, artistic voices, especially those of the younger generation, has become even more prevalent and easily accessible to the community of Aruba through online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. □

Source: Historia di Literatura Arubiano: E Bida Cultural by J.R. "Quito" Nicolaas



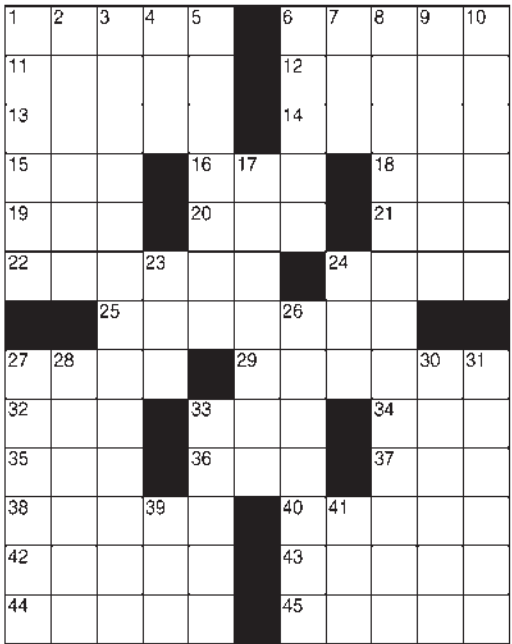
CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 40 Terra —
- 1 Bulb units
- 6 Lesson leader
- 11 "Adam Bede" author
- 12 Chilled
- 13 Bugs bugs him
- 14 Big books
- 15 Word on a bill
- 16 Penny prez
- 18 Quarter-back Manning
- 19 Pitching stat
- 20 Walker, on a sign
- 21 Charged bit
- 22 Military alert status
- 24 Crumb carriers
- 25 Libya neighbor
- 27 Like an abyss
- 29 Jazz bands
- 32 Mess up
- 33 Suffer
- 34 Smelter supply
- 35 Contrived
- 36 Frilly wrap
- 37 Wee bit
- 38 Stage comment

DOWN

- 1 Did garden work
- 2 Attraction
- 3 #1 hit for Cyndi Lauper
- 4 Sock part
- 5 Attach, in a way
- 6 Carried
- 7 One, for Juan
- 8 #1 hit for Jim Croce
- 9 Spotted cat
- 10 Lacquer ingredients
- 17 Del Toro of "The Usual Suspects"
- 23 Recipe unit
- 24 Target
- 26 Comforts
- 27 Head out
- 28 Classroom need
- 30 Gave addresses
- 31 Some autos
- 33 Aids illegally
- 39 Game cube
- 41 Bullring cry



12-29

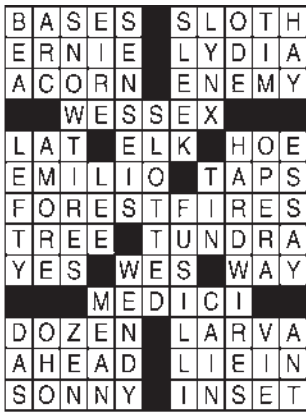
A XYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-29 CRYPTOQUOTE

BCK IBB KQC WIMBXHCN SW
TSXH FINK TCIH DC TSXH
DCNK EXMLC MG KQC GCV
TCIH. — YCQYCK YXHIK
MBLIG

Cryptoquote: BIRDS SING AFTER A STORM; WHY SHOULDN'T PEOPLE FEEL AS FREE TO DELIGHT IN WHATEVER SUNLIGHT REMAINS TO THEM? — ROSE KENNEDY

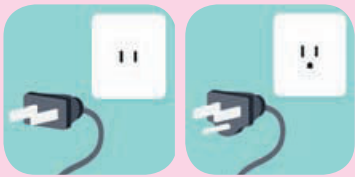


Cruise ship Schedule: Dec. 19 - 24 2025

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
FRI	19	CORAL PRINCESS	07.00	16.00	B	1
		MS RENAISSANCE	09.00	18.00	C	1
		WIND SPIRIT	12.01	****	G	1
SAT	20	ZUIDERDAM	07.00	16.00	B	1
		AIDAPERLA	09.00	22.00	C	1
		WIND SPIRIT - Dept.	****	19.00	G	
SUN	21	SILVER SHADOW	13.00	****	C	1
		FREEWINDS - Dept.	****	22.30	E	-
MON	22	SILVER SHADOW - Dept.	****	18.00	C	
TUE	23	CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	23.00	B	1
		SEVEN SEAS MARINER	10.00	22.00	C	1
		NORWEGIAN SKY	13.30	20.00	I	1
WED	24	BRITANNIA	07.00	18.00	B	1
		ROTTERDAM	08.00	17.00	C	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1
		OCEANIA ALLURA	10.00	23.00	I	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.



Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.



Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 8 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.



Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku

7		5	6			8		1
	4			9		6		
8	1			3				
9			1			7	2	
							1	
		7	3			5		
5								6
4			7			3		
3	8	2		6				5

Difficulty: ★★★★★

12/19

Answer to previous puzzle

5	4	7	8	3	9	1	6	2
8	3	2	6	5	1	9	4	7
6	9	1	2	4	7	5	8	3
3	1	6	9	7	4	2	5	8
2	8	9	3	6	5	4	7	1
7	5	4	1	2	8	3	9	6
4	7	3	5	8	2	6	1	9
1	6	5	7	9	3	8	2	4
9	2	8	4	1	6	7	3	5

Difficulty: ★★★

12/18

Saturn's moon Titan may not have a buried ocean as long suspected, new study suggests

By MARCIA DUNN

AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.

(AP) — Saturn's giant moon Titan may not have a vast underground ocean after all.

Titan instead may hold deep layers of ice and slush more akin to Earth's polar seas, with pockets of melted water where life could possibly survive and even thrive, scientists reported Wednesday.

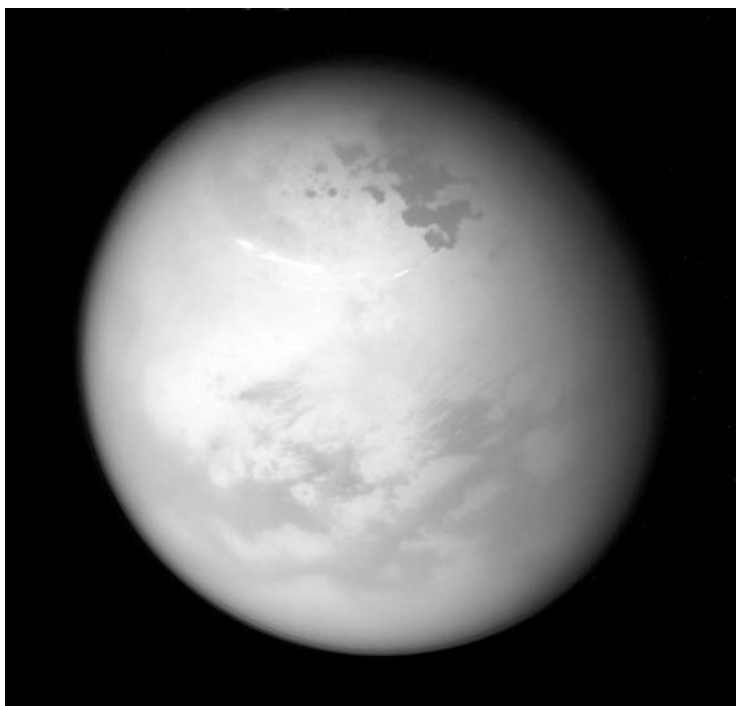
The team led by researchers at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory challenged the decade-long assumption of a buried global ocean at Titan after taking a fresh look at observations made years ago by NASA's Cassini spacecraft around Saturn.

They stress that no one has found any signs of life at Titan, the solar system's second largest moon spanning 3,200 miles (5,150 kilometers) and brimming with lakes of liquid methane on its frosty surface.

But with the latest findings suggesting a slushy, near-melting environment, "there is strong justification for continued optimism regarding the potential for extraterrestrial life," said the University of Washington's Baptiste Journaux, who took part in the study published in the journal Nature.

As to what form of life that might be, possibly strictly microscopic, "nature has repeatedly demonstrated far greater creativity than the most imaginative scientists," he said in an email. JPL's Flavio Petricca, the lead author, said Titan's ocean may have frozen in the past and is currently melting, or its hydrosphere might be evolving toward complete freezing.

Computer models suggest these layers of ice, slush and water extend to a depth of more than 340 miles (550 kilometers). The outer ice shell is thought to be about 100 miles (170 kilometers) deep, covering layers of slush and pools of water that could go down another 250 miles (400 kilometers). This water could



This image provided by NASA shows bright methane clouds drifting in the summer skies of Saturn's moon Titan, along with dark hydrocarbon lakes and seas clustered around the north pole, as seen from the Cassini spacecraft, June 9, 2017.

Associated Press

be as warm as 68 degrees Fahrenheit (20 degrees Celsius).

Because Titan is tidally locked, the same side of the moon faces Saturn all the time, just like our own moon and Earth. Saturn's gravitational pull is so intense that it deforms the moon's surface, creating bulges as high as 30 feet (10 meters) when the two bodies are closest.

Through improved data processing, Petricca and his team managed to measure the timing between the peak gravitational tug and the rising of Titan's surface. If the moon

held a wet ocean, the effect would be immediate, Petricca said, but a 15-hour gap was detected, indicating an interior of slushy ice with pockets of liquid water. Computer modeling of Titan's orientation in space supported their theory.

Sapienza University of Rome's Luciano less, whose previous studies using Cassini data indicated a hidden ocean at Titan, is not convinced by the latest findings.

While "certainly intriguing and will stimulate renewed discussion ... at present, the available evidence looks

certainly not sufficient to exclude Titan from the family of ocean worlds," less said in an email.

NASA's planned Dragonfly mission featuring a helicopter-type craft due to launch to Titan later this decade is expected to provide more clarity on the moon's innards. Journaux is part of that team.

Saturn leads the solar system's moon inventory with 274. Jupiter's moon Ganymede is just a little larger than Titan, with a possible underground ocean. Other suspected water worlds include Saturn's Enceladus and Jupiter's Europa, both of which are believed to have geysers of water erupting from their frozen crusts.

Launched in 1997, Cassini reached Saturn in 2004, orbiting the ringed planet and flying past its moons until deliberately plunging through Saturn's atmosphere in 2017. □



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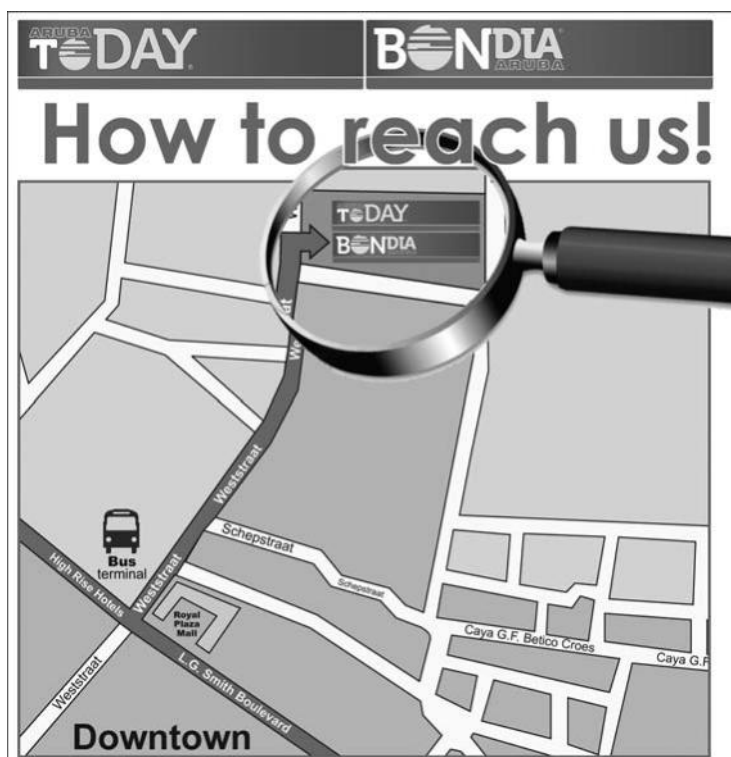
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HEALTH

DOCTOR ON DUTY

Oranjestad

Hospital 7:00 pm / 10:00pm
Tel. 527 4000

San Nicolas

Imsan 24 hours
Tel. 524 8833

PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad:

Trupiaal: Tel. 583 8560

San Nicolas:

Seroe Preto: Tel. 584 4833

OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850

Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002

Urgent Care 586 0448

Walk-In Doctor's Clinic

+297 588 0539

EMERGENCY

Police	100
Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

Aruba Airport	524 2424
American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

AID FOUNDATIONS

Aruba Food Bank	Tel. 588 0002
FAVI- Visually Impaired	Tel. 582 5051
Alcoholics Anonymous	Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous	Tel. 583 8989
Fundacion Contra Violencia	Relacional Tel. 583 5400
Centre for Diabetes	Tel. 524 8888
Child Abuse Prevention	Tel. 582 4433
Quota Club	Tel. 525 2672

General Info

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

One Tech Tip: Spend quality time with loved ones, not a screen, over the holidays

By **KELVIN CHAN**
AP Business Writer

The Christmas holiday season is a time to step back from the busy pace of modern life and connect with our nearest and dearest instead of screens, apps and chatbots.

Here are some suggestions on how to unplug from the online world for the next few weeks as you sit down for a festive meal, exchange gifts or take time out for some self-reflection.

Do not disturb me

Your phone already has built-in features that can help you stop getting distracted. To temporarily silence all those attention-seeking notifications, use the Focus setting on your iPhone or Android device. This mode is designed to stop interruptions when you want to concentrate. You can customize it by blocking specific apps or muting only when you're doing certain things, like sleeping or reading. Android and iOS also have related screen time controls to manage overall device usage. Too much Instagram scrolling? Limit yourself to a daily total of 20 minutes.

There are other tricks you could try, like turning the screen gray to make it less appealing.

On iPhones or Android devices, tweak the color filter or adjustment settings. On Android, activating Bed-time Mode also turns the screen gray.

Delete apps



A person takes a photo of holiday lights, Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2025, at a park in Lenexa, Kan.
Associated Press

If you need to be more strict with yourself, then delete any or apps you're addicted to. An effective way to stop looking at your phone is by removing those apps that you spend the most time scrolling through, even if temporarily. You can always reinstall them again if the withdrawal symptoms become too much.

Get outside ...

When the temperature drops, it's tempting to hunker down inside and stay cozy. But don't sit on the couch all day. Head outdoors, away from Wi-Fi signals. If it's been snowing where you are, have a snowball fight or go sledding. To keep your hands warm, don't forget to put on bulky mittens which your phone's touch screen

won't respond to.

Even if there's no snow, take a walk in the woods, a park or along some tree-lined streets. Time spent outdoors, and away from screens, can benefit your mental health and physical well-being. There's even a term for it: forest bathing.

... And touch grass

There's an app you can use to force yourself to literally get back in touch with nature. Touch Grass takes its name from a viral catchphrase for when someone has lost their connection to the real world because they're consumed by what's on their screens.

It's similar to other apps designed to restrict screen time by forcing users to take a timeout from scrolling.

The difference is that Touch Grass requires users to go outside and take a picture of themselves physically touching some grass.

Touch Grass has a free service level that allows you to block two apps. I found it was quite effective at stopping me from opening two of my favorite time-wasters, Reddit and Instagram, though I ended up spending more time on other apps like Facebook. To block all apps, you'll have to shell out for a subscription \$6 a month or \$50 annually. If you can't find grass because it's winter, there's also the option to touch snow or sand. It's only available for iPhones so far, but there are copycat versions for both iOS and Android, though

we haven't tested them.

Putting pen to paper

When was the last time you sent a Christmas card? Most digital natives find it easier to type out holiday greetings or send digital cards over chat apps, than to put pen to paper.

The consequence of all the time that we spend tapping, typing or swiping on our devices is that handwriting is becoming something of a dying art. But there are neurological and cognitive benefits of handwriting, research suggests. For example, taking notes by hand is a better way for students to learn and to remember information.

So use this time of year to write a thoughtful message to someone special, a letter to a long-lost friend, or thank you notes for presents received.

Pick up a book

If you still don't know what you want for Christmas, why not ask for a book? It's easy to find inspiration and ideas at this time of year, when many people like to share the books they've read over the past 12 months, and outlets including The Associated Press compile their list of the year's best books. Reading long-form literature or non-fiction has many benefits that can't be gained from glancing at short-form bursts of text on your device, including a deeper understanding of a topic, developing empathy, increasing your focus and concentration and more. □

IBM buys data streaming platform Confluent in \$11 billion deal



The logo for IBM appears above a trading post on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, March 18, 2019.

Associated Press

The Associated Press

IBM said Monday it's buying data streaming platform Confluent in a deal worth \$11 billion that will help bolster the technology company's artificial intelligence strategy. The two companies said they signed a "definitive agreement" for IBM to acquire all of Confluent Inc.'s issued and outstanding common stock for \$31 per share in cash, which represents an enterprise value of \$11 billion.

Confluent, based in Mountain View, Calif., is an open source data streaming platform that "connects, processes and governs" data and events in real time, the companies said in a joint statement. It special-

izes in preparing data for AI and keeping it "clean and connected across systems and applications," they said.

The deal means IBM's client companies can deploy artificial intelligence services better and faster "by providing trusted communication and data flow between environments, applications and APIs," IBM CEO Arvind Krishna said in the statement. "Data is spread across public and private clouds, data centers and countless technology providers."

The transaction is expected to close in mid-2026. It still needs approval from Confluent shareholders as well as clearance from regulators. □



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GO-KART RENTALS



Jake Paul and Anthony Joshua have a lot to lose in Netflix bout

MIAMI (AP) — Jake Paul proudly boasts he has become the face of boxing during the past decade. Now the YouTuber-turned-fighter is ready to embark on his riskiest ring venture yet after 13 professional fights featuring a cross section of opponents that lack the active status and talent of his next rival.

Paul will fight two-time heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua on Friday night at the Kaseya Center, home of the NBA's Miami Heat. The scheduled eight-round bout will be streamed on Netflix without the pay-per-view designation.

Although the 36-year-old Joshua (28-4, 25 KOs) has not fought since September 2024, when he was knocked out by Daniel Dubois in five rounds, he is the prohibitive favorite to derail Paul's ambitious fight plans. "The odds are stacked against me," Paul said Wednesday in the fighters' final media appearance before the bout. "There are no sporting teams in history that have gone together where it's this big of a difference in terms of skills, experience, resume, height,



Jake Paul, left, and Anthony Joshua, face off during a news conference promoting their upcoming heavyweight boxing match, Wednesday, Dec. 17, 2025, in Miami Beach, Fla.

Associated Press

weight. This is going to be the biggest upset in the history of sport and you guys get to witness it."

In their photo standoff that closed Wednesday's event, the 6-foot-6 Joshua towered over the 6-1 Paul. Joshua also has a six-inch reach advantage, 82-76. In addition, 12 of Paul's bouts have been at the 200-pound cruiserweight limit. The 28-year-old Paul

(12-1, 7 KOs) has built his professional record through unconventional methods. He has victories over retired UFC champions Anderson Silva and Nate Diaz and also won a convincing decision against former middleweight titleholder Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.

Paul's ability to entice 58-year-old Mike Tyson to fight him last year further enhanced the circus-like

atmosphere that often define his bouts. Yet, the bout against legendary heavyweight champion, which Paul won by unanimous decision, attracted 72,300 at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas. The fight also generated a reported 108 million global views.

For all the followers Paul has won through his social media platforms, he acknowledges there are detractors

who view him as an insult to the sport and the fighters who have traveled the arduous trek toward contention and championship opportunities.

"No one has done more for the sport of boxing in the past decade than myself," said Paul, who also has formed his promotional company that will oversee Friday's nine-bout card. "I think if people really cared about boxing they'd want me to win."

"I see the angle that they're coming from — that (Joshua's) the traditional boxer, that he's been doing it for his whole life. But I think I'm more important for the sport of boxing. If they actually cared about the sport, they'd want me to win."

Joshua, who also won an Olympic gold medal representing his native England in the 2012 Summer Games, understands his perceived role as a boxing savior against Paul. "It just seems I've been called in to save the purest of boxing," Joshua said. "People don't like the fact that I'm fighting Jake. Whether that concerns me or not is another question. □"

Elle Duncan leaves ESPN for Netflix, will host sports and cultural live events

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Elle Duncan has signed a multi-year deal with Netflix to host its sports and other cultural live events.

The streamer made the announcement on Thursday.

Duncan had been with ESPN since 2016, where she hosted the 6 p.m. edition of "SportsCenter" along with the women's NCAA Tournament and WNBA.

Her final "SportsCenter" appearance was on Tuesday.

"Elle Duncan's proven ability to seamlessly move between hard-hitting sports analysis and warm, personality-driven cultural hosting makes her a perfect fit at Netflix. She immediately adds credibility and familiar star power to our global programming slate," said Gabe Spitzer, Netflix's vice president of sports.

Netflix has rapidly expanded its sports portfolio the past two years.

It will have a Christmas Day doubleheader for the second straight year. It will begin doing Major League Baseball games next season that include an opening night matchup and the Home Run Derby.

Duncan's first on-air hosting duties with Netflix will be early next year with Skyscraper Live. The event will feature free solo climber Alex Honnold's attempt to scale Taipei 101, the tallest building in Taiwan.

"Joining Netflix feels like being invited to an already legendary party and somehow getting handed the aux cord! For a lifelong utility player, a multisport assignment is a full-circle moment," Duncan said in a statement. □



Elle Duncan sits on the set at an NCAA college basketball game between Tennessee and UConn, Jan. 26, 2023, in Knoxville, Tenn.

Associated Press

Dry needling is common around the NFL, and players aren't worried despite Watt's collapsed lung

By JAY COHEN
AP Sports Writer

LAKE FOREST, Ill. (AP) — Arizona Cardinals tight end Trey McBride heard about what happened to Pittsburgh Steelers star T.J. Watt and McBride plans to continue his weekly dry-needling sessions.

"It's something I do frequently. I've never had an issue like that," he said. "But with every treatment, everything that you get done, I mean, there's risk to everything."

The risk that goes along with dry needling at least in certain areas caught many off guard last week when Watt was sent to the hospital with a partially collapsed lung sustained during the procedure. The 2021 NFL Defensive Player of the Year is out indefinitely after having surgery.

Dry needling is a treatment used by physical therapists and acupuncturists to treat pain and movement issues, according to the Cleveland Clinic. The medical professionals insert needles under the skin to target trigger points knotted or tender areas in muscles.

"I think there's like a bit of a systemic reaction," said



Pittsburgh Steelers linebacker T.J. Watt enters the field before an NFL football game against the Buffalo Bills, Nov. 30, 2025, in Pittsburgh

Associated Press

Chicago Bears center Drew Dalman, who has the treatment five to 10 times per year. "Like when you do that, it can draw blood flow and things like that to effected areas. I think there is some of that classic acupuncture muscle tension effect. I've always used that in terms of soft tissue-type issues."

Dry needling gives NFL players relief for tight mus-

cles

Dry needling is often part of a larger pain management plan, according to the Cleveland Clinic. The treatment is designed to alleviate tightness and tender areas in muscles by increasing blood flow to the area. It also can spark the release of endorphins that help with the pain.

The treatment is called dry needling because the thin

needles don't have any medication.

"It just releases tight muscles," New York Giants linebacker Bobby Okereke said. "Obviously you have some fascial tension, so it helps release some of the fascia, too. It can kind of give you like a targeted trigger-point release where massage might not be able to get the muscle to release or different stretching tech-

niques might not. Sometimes you stick a needle deep into that area, and it just gets it to relax."

Two of the most common techniques are superficial when the practitioner inserts the needle into the bottom layer of skin above the trigger point and deep when the needle is inserted deep into the muscle to penetrate the trigger point. There is also the pistoning technique, when the practitioner quickly moves the needle up and down through the tissue.

According to the Cleveland Clinic, dry needling is approved for use in 37 states and Washington, D.C. Training and certification can vary by state. Pennsylvania does not explicitly allow or ban the practice.

Washington Commanders guard Sam Cosmi said he started using dry needling during his college days at the University of Texas. Playing his fifth NFL season, he has a session every three weeks or so.

He described the sensation of the needle going in as a "bite." "I only do it when I have to do it. It's not my favorite thing," Cosmi said. □

World Series champion Dodgers' full share is \$484,748, up from 2024 but below 2022 record

NEW YORK (AP) — A full post-season share for the World Series champion Dodgers totaled \$484,748, up from the amount Los Angeles players earned in 2024 but still down

from the winner's figure in 2022 and 2023.

The total postseason pool of nearly \$128.2 million was down slightly from the record \$129.1 million in 2024,

the commissioner's office said Thursday. The yearly pool amount is impacted by ballpark capacities.

Los Angeles players voted 82 full shares and 12.5 partial shares for 94.5 full share equivalents plus \$340,000 in cash awards in dividing a pool of \$46.1 million.

Houston received a record full share of \$516,347 in 2022, when the World Series champion Astros divided their pool into 59 full shares, 14.14 partial shares and \$940,000 in cash awards. A full share on the 2023 champion Texas Rangers was worth \$506,263, and the 2024 Dodgers' full share was \$477,441.

Full share equivalents have risen in recent years. San Francisco had 56.65 when

it won the title in 2014.

All players and managers eligible for the World Series who were with the team or on an injured list from June 1 or later get a full share. Those not with the team on or after June 1 are eligible to get a full share or percentage share as voted by that team's players along with two certified athletic trainers and one strength and conditioning coach. Spring training coaches, scouts and the grounds crew are eligible for cash awards but not shares.

Executives such as general managers, assistant GMs, directors of baseball operations, team physicians and resident security agents are not eligible for any part of

the pool.

A full share for the AL champion Toronto Blue Jays came to \$354,118 just below the \$354,572 last year for the New York Yankees when they lost to the Dodgers in the World Series. Toronto had 70 full shares, 15.44 partial shares and \$508,5000 cash awards.

Full shares for other playoff teams this year were:

- \$182,376 for Seattle
- \$168,853 for Milwaukee
- \$52,044 for Philadelphia
- \$48,741 for the Chicago Cubs
- \$47,318 for the Yankees
- \$46,865 for Detroit
- \$11,528 for Cincinnati
- \$11,057 for Cleveland
- \$10,711 for San Diego
- \$9,347 for Boston. □



Los Angeles Dodgers World Series MVP Yoshinobu Yamamoto holds his trophy as teammates celebrate their win in Game 7 of baseball's World Series against the Toronto Blue Jays, Sunday, Nov. 2, 2025, in Toronto.

Associated Press